

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NEW BISHOP OF RAVENNA ASSUMES OFFICE

1. MONS. ERSILIO TONINI, FORMERLY BISHOP OF MACERATA (PUGLIA), ASSUMED HIS NEW DUTIES THIS WEEK AS ARCHBISHOP OF RAVENNA IN SUCCESSION TO MONS. BALDASSARI WHO HAS BEEN NOTABLE IN THE PAST FOR HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH CATHOLIC DISSENT AND LEFT WING CAUSES. MONS. BALDASSARI RESIGNED HIS OFFICE AT 69 YEARS OF AGE FOR 'HEALTH REASONS'.

2. MONS. TONINI, 61 YEARS OF AGE, SON OF PEASANTS FROM PIACENZA (EMILIA-ROMAGNA) GAINED EARLY FAVOR WITH THE COMMUNISTS WHEN AFTER BEING RAISED TO BISHOP OF MACERATA IN 1969, HE CEDED CHURCH LANDS TO LOCAL FARMERS. LATER, THEIR JUDGEMENT BECAME HARSHER WHEN THE BISHOP DEVOTED TIME AND ENERGY TO THE CHURCH-SPONSORED CIVIC COMMITTEES OF THE DIOCESE AND DISCIPLINED ONE OF HIS CLERICS WHO HAD JOINED 'CHRISTIANS FOR SOCIALISM'.

3. AS SUCCESSOR TO THE 'RED ARCHBISHOP', MONS. TONINI IS ALREADY BEING CHARACTERIZED AS THE VATICAN AGENT TO RE-ESTABLISH PRE-VATICAN 11 ATTITUDES IN THE RAVENNA DIOCESE. THE NEW ARCHBISHOP REFUSES TO ACCEPT ANY SUCH CHARACTERIZATION. HE STATED 'I COME AS A BROTHER--A PASTOR MUST SHOW CHARITY, UNDERSTANDING AND HUMILITY.

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4. COMMENT: THE EXIT OF MONS. BALDASSARI FROM HIS DIOCESE LESSENS THE AUTHORITY OF ONE OF THE LEADING FIGURES LENDING

RESPECTABILITY TO THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLICS WITH MARXISTS
AND MARXIST SPONSORED CAUSES. GORDON

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